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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was on determining: (1) the extent to which departments of school administration and supervision that are members of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) have formulated criteria for selecting appropriate sites for administrative internships and for onsite supervisors for administrative internships; (2) the process used in applying those criteria; and (3) the nature of the selection criteria and process. A total of 38 institutions (79 percent of the UCEA institutions) provided useable information about the selection criteria and process. Content analysis was used to examine the data received from the institutions. Only 7 institutions provided evidence of formal criteria, 7 stated that they were using some type of informal criteria, and 24 reported no criteria whatsoever for the selection of sites for internships. A total of 30 institutions did not identify any criteria that they were using for the express purpose of selecting appropriate onsite supervisors, 6 had formal criteria, and 2 had informal criteria. The appendixes contain copies of the inquiry used in the initial request and the followup letter and separate proposals for the selection of possible internship sites and onsite supervisors. (MLF)

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THE ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIP: SITE AND SUPERVISOR SELECTION

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UCEA Conference, October 31, 1987
Charlottesville, Virginia

EA 019 798

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The Administrative Internship:

Site and Supervisor Selection

Introduction

The administrative internship has long been recommended as a desirable, if not essential, component of administrator training.[1] The most recent affirmation of the importance of the internship may be found in the publication, Leaders for America's Schools, which emphasizes clinical experience for prospective administrators.[2] While the popularity of the administrative internship is acknowledged, the question remains: to what extent has research been conducted on its implications and effectiveness?

A review of the educational literature on the topic of administrative internships has revealed that most of the literature is promotional in nature,[3] whereas the few research studies reported tend to be critical in nature.[4] (It should be noted that the limited number of studies on internships is not unique to educational administration. Teacher education, which has long included a field experience as part of its training, has drawn considerable criticism recently because of the lack of empirical support for the effectiveness of field experiences for teachers.[5]) However, there is no shortage of articles and reports recommending certain conditions as prerequisite to a successful administrative internship.[6]

An examination of those articles and reports suggests that two of the variables that are most likely to affect the success of

an administrative internship are the quality of the site in which the internship occurs and the characteristics of the on-site supervisor. Elements of the site that are believed to be important include the amount of release time for the intern, nature of the experiences provided, and opportunity for the intern to obtain periodic feedback on performance. Characteristics of the on-site supervisor believed to be important include supervisory skill, appropriate modeling for administration, and commitment to the professional growth of the intern. The extent to which departments of educational administration and supervision are taking these variables into consideration in their selection of an appropriate site and on-site supervisor for an administrative internship could not be ascertained from the literature.

Description of the Study

The focus of this study was on determining (1) the extent to which departments of school administration and supervision that are members of the University Council for Educational Administration have formulated criteria for selecting appropriate sites for administrative internships and for on-site supervisors for administrative internships; (2) the process used in applying those criteria, and (3) the nature of the selection criteria and process. Rather than being provided with a list of possible selection criteria and process steps to react to regarding their use, the departments of school administration and supervision were sent a letter asking them to forward documents that identified

the selection criteria and process being used. If such official documents were not available, the departments were requested to describe in writing whatever selection process and criteria were being employed. (A copy of the inquiry used in the initial request, as well as a copy of the follow-up letter, may be found in Appendix A.)

A month after the initial inquiry a follow-up letter was sent to the nonrespondents. About two months later a telephone contact was made with a random sample of those departments that had not yet responded, in order to determine the nature of their selection criteria and process. For one reason or another, it proved impossible to obtain useful information from these departments. Nevertheless, a total of 38 institutions or 79 percent of the UCEA institutions did respond to the initial inquiry or follow-up letter and provided useable information about the selection criteria and process. In fact, many of the departments indicated that the inquiry had caused them to recognize the need to develop formal selection criteria and a better selection process for screening sites and on-site supervisors for their internship program.

Content analysis was used to examine the data received from the UCEA institutions responding to the inquiry about selection criteria and process. The content analysis was guided by six basic questions:

1. To what extent do UCEA institutions possess formal criteria and use a formal process for the selection

of sites for administrative internships?

2. To what degree do UCEA institutions use informal criteria and an informal process for the selection of sites for administrative internships?
3. What is the nature of the site selection criteria and process used by UCEA institutions?
4. To what extent do UCEA institutions possess formal criteria and use a formal process for the selection of possible on-site supervisors for interns?
5. To what degree do UCEA institutions use informal criteria and an informal process for the selection of possible on-site supervisors for interns?
6. What is the nature of the criteria and process used to select on-site supervisors?

Documents and written descriptions provided by the responding UCEA departments of educational administration were analyzed to address these six questions. The selection criteria and process were considered to be "formal" if they were described in an official document that appeared to have been approved by a department. Selection criteria and process were considered to be "informal" if a department responded that there were no written standards or guidelines but provided the researcher with a description regarding the selection criteria and process being used. When feasible and appropriate, tallies were made and percentages computed to identify trends in the data. The results of that analysis are presented in the following section.

Findings of the Study

The administrative internship has for some time been advanced as a valuable aspect of administrator preparation. A basic assumption seems to be that administrator candidates need an opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have acquired in university courses to the kinds of problems and issues they will be facing on the job. An implicit assumption is that the experiences provided during an internship will be more useful to the intern's professional growth than some alternative learning opportunity. Whether this assumption is valid probably depends on a number of variables, but two major factors believed to impact the most on the usefulness of an internship are the quality of the site at which an internship occurs and the characteristics of the on-site supervisor.

Site Selection Criteria and Process

Table 1 presents data on the extent to which UCEA institutions possess criteria for the selection of sites for administrative interns.

Table 1

Existence of Criteria for Selection of Sites

	Responding Institutions	
	Number	Percent
Formal Criteria	7	18.42%
Informal Criteria	7	18.42%
No Criteria	24	63.16%

As can be seen from an examination of Table 1, only a little over 18 percent of the UCEA institutions responding to the survey provided evidence of formal criteria for the selection of sites for administrative internships. An equal percentage of the institutions stated that they were using some type of informal criteria.

Most of the UCEA institutions reported no criteria whatsoever for the selection of sites for internships. (It should be noted that in none of these cases did an institution indicate that no internship program existed; respondents simply identified no criteria.) While the author of this paper finds it incredible that these institutions employ no criteria at all, none was reported. Perhaps these institutions are utilizing some type of criteria but were reluctant to identify them for the study.

Table 2 on the following page identifies the types of criteria that were reported for the selection of sites for administrative internships.

Figure 2

Types of Selection Criteria

Rank	Criteria
1 (Most frequently reported)	Someone in the department knows "something" about the school or district.
	Student personally selects the site.
	Opportunity for meaningful learning experiences.
2	Opportunity for a variety of experiences.
3	At least a half-time placement.
4	Appropriate funding for the internship.
	Appropriate salary for the intern.
	School possesses reputation for educational leadership
5 (Least frequently reported)	Opportunity for professional travel and attendance at meetings.
	School district wealth.

Most of the institutions that identified site selection criteria indicated the use of only one or two criteria. The three most frequently reported site selection criteria were that "someone" in the department knew "something" about a potential site, the student personally would select the site, and that "meaningful" learning experiences were available. (Although the term "meaningful" was used frequently in connection with site

selection and other aspects of the selection process when criteria were stated, there was seldom any definition of that term.)

Less frequently identified as site selection criteria were "opportunity for at least a half-time internship" and "a reputation for academic excellence on the part of the school or district." School district wealth, which in reality probably determines the availability of internships, was apparently not considered to be a very important factor in selecting a site.

Although the UCEA institutions were requested to provide a description of the process used to gather evidence or data on the extent to which the site selection criteria could be met, very few institutions reported anything. The impression received from an examination of what was provided was that the site selection process at best consists of a short, brief application and a visit (of indeterminate length and depth) to the site by someone from the university prior to selection. The objective of these techniques seemed to be the determination of site availability and personnel cooperation. No UCEA institution described or reported a comprehensive process for assessing the quality and adequacy of sites for possible internships.

Criteria and Process for Selection of the On-Site Supervisor

Potentially, at least, the on-site supervisor is probably the most important variable affecting the success of an internship.

Although an intern may lack office space and adequate secretarial assistance or may be faced with limited release time for the internship or some other situational constraint, if there is an opportunity to work with an on-site supervisor who is an appropriate role model, possesses good supervisory skills, and cares about the intern's professional development, then the intern may still gain a great deal from the internship experience. Whether an on-site supervisor makes this kind of a positive and significant contribution will, in most cases, depend in large part on the kind of selection criteria used by the university, as well as on the thoroughness of the process employed to collect and verify the data needed to meet the criteria.

Figure 3 shows the extent to which responding UCEA institutions are using formal, informal, or no criteria in the selection of on-site supervisors for the internship program.

Figure 3

Existence of Criteria for the Selection of On-Site Supervisors

	Responding Institutions	
	Number	Percent
Formal Criteria	6	16%
Informal Criteria	2	5%
No Criteria	30	79%

Most UCEA institutions that responded to the survey did not identify any criteria that they were using for the express purpose

of selecting appropriate on-site supervisors. One could infer, of course, that these institutions at least used the criterion of "willingness to supervise an intern," although not even this "standard" was identified in response to the survey. Those UCEA institutions which did report selection criteria tended to submit an official document that appeared to have been approved by the department.

Table 4 identifies the kinds of selection criteria that were being used for the screening of possible on-site supervisors.

Table 4

Types of Criteria for Selecting On-Site Supervisors

Rank	Criteria Reported
1 (Most frequently reported)	✓Warm and willing
2	✓Commitment to facilitating learning experiences for intern
3	Willingness to provide direction and guidance to intern
4	Willingness to evaluate intern's performance (summative)
5	Site supervisor must possess the certificate sought by the intern
	* Outstanding practitioner; established reputation for leadership
	* Possesses the attitudes and values that should be developed in future administrators

(Continued)

(next page)

Table 4 (Continued)

Rank	Criteria Reported
6 (Least frequently reported)	Commitment to participate in the planning of the learning experience
	Experienced administrator
	Has the time and willingness to supervise interns

Although Table 4 presents a sizeable list of different kinds of criteria for the selection of possible on-site supervisors, most of the institutions reporting criteria indicated the use of only two or three of these. Furthermore, many of the criteria shown in Table 4 appear to represent minimal standards, e.g., "warm and willing" and "experienced." Only two institutions stated that they were screening for outstanding practitioners who possessed appropriate attitudes and values.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that most institutions that identified their selection criteria were concerned about whether potential on-site supervisors had a commitment to facilitate learning experiences for interns and were willing to evaluate interns and provide direction and guidelines. The process used by those institutions that were involved in using selection criteria for the screening of on-site supervisors typically consisted of an application calling for mainly demographic data but which included a place for a supervisor

to indicate that the desired experiences for the intern would be provided and the intern's performance would be evaluated.

Conclusions and Recommendations

If the information provided by the UCEA institutions is complete and accurate, it would appear that most of them have no criteria for selecting possible internship sites and on-site supervisors, and that most of those institutions that do have criteria lack a comprehensive process for gathering and verifying data that could be used to indicate the extent to which the selection criteria are being met. While the information supplied by the UCEA institutions clearly support such a conclusion, the abysmal nature of the findings as well as the scandalous nature of the conclusions which flow from such findings, cause one to raise the question of whether the information was complete or accurate. Although I have no data from the study to suggest that the information was incomplete or inaccurate, I suspect that the situation may not be as bad as the findings suggest.

Part of the problem may be that although many of the UCEA institutions identified no selection criteria, a number of them may have possessed <u>some</u> type of criteria but were reluctant to report them because they didn't seem professional enough, e.g., "warm and willing." Also, many of those UCEA institutions that identified no selection criteria may have such a small internship program or may operate in a region with such limited school district interest

in establishing internship stations that the institutions felt they were not in a position to use selection criteria or a comprehensive process for screening possible sites. In these situations what is probably occurring is student selection of the site for the internship, with almost automatic approval by the university, and school district selection of the supervising administrator with university acquiesence.

Furthermore, it should be noted that a number of the UCEA institutions that responded to the survey stated that it had sparked their awareness that they needed to develop selection criteria, and that they were already in the process of doing so; or that they hoped, as a result of this study, that criteria would be recommended for site and supervisor selection. Therefore, it is conceivable that many more UCEA institutions now have selection criteria.

Putting the best possible face and interpretation on the findings, however, it would still appear that most UCEA institutions lack comprehensive criteria for the selection of sites and on-site supervisors for administrative internships and a thorough process for determining whether the criteria have been met.

In the absence of comprehensive selection criteria and a thorough process of determining whether the criteria have been met, the potential would seem to be great that student and school district self-selection with merely acquiesence by the university is a likely occurrence. Whether this type

of selection criteria and process will result in very many quality internships is doubtful. Student and school district in-put are important, but the university should have its own selection criteria and process for screening possible internship sites and on-site supervisors. And it is further contended that the selection criteria need to be comprehensive in nature, and the process for determining whether the criteria have been met should be thorough.

To stimulate thinking about developing comprehensive criteria for the selection of possible internship sites and for the selection of on-site supervisors, a separate proposal for each has been prepared and is presented in Appendix B. Although a thorough process for determining whether the criteria have been met is not included in the appendix, it is recommended that a combination of applications, interviews, and on-site observations be used to collect the evidence called for in the two criteria guides.

Finally, it is recognized that everyone may not agree with all of the criteria being recommended or on the necessity for a thorough selection process. For example, some people -- perhaps many -- may feel that the on-site supervisor need not be an excellent administrator and that an intern can learn as much if not more by observing the mistakes of an average or even a poor administrator. While I don't subscribe to this premise or its underlying assumptions, I accept the fact that different people hold diverse views on this subject. What is

important is that departments of school administration and supervision develop formal, comprehensive selection criteria and a thorough selection process that the departments agree are professionally defensible and which will result in quality internships. Based on the findings of this study, it would appear that much remains to be done in order to achieve this objective.

References

1. For an excellent review of the origins and various aspects of establishing an internship program, see Davies, D.(1962). The internship in educational administration. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Research in Education.
2. National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (1987). Leaders for America's schools. Tucson, Arizona: The University Council for Educational Administration, 10, 19-20.
3. Review based on computer search of journals, ERIC and Dissertation Abstracts from 1965-1987. For examples of promotional literature, see Curcio, J. and Manning, E. (1986, March). Administrative internships return more than you invest. The Executive Educator, 8, 23+.
4. For example, see Sweeney, J. (1981, Winter). Principal internships -- a look at the facts. Education, 102, 151-153.
5. Grummett, P. and Ratzhaff, H. (1986, November/December). Expectations for the cooperating teacher role. Journal of Teacher Education, 37, 41-50.
6. See, for example, Pellicer, L. The evolution and training of school principals (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 218-707) and Hensarling, P. and Erlandson, D. Handbook for the supervision of the intern in school administration (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 242-090).

APPENDIX A

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN—MILWAUKEE/ P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

AREA CODE 414
963-4740

Dear Internship Coordinator:

I am a member of a departmental committee that is examining its current administrator internship program for the purpose of improving it. At this point we are discussing the possible need for criteria and guidelines for site (school and/or district) selection for an internship.

It would be deeply appreciated if you could send me, in the envelope provided, a copy of any standards, guidelines, and/or materials that your department uses in evaluating whether or not a particular school site would be approved for the establishment of an administrative internship station. We are especially interested in the criteria and process you use to determine whether a particular administrator -- a principal, for example -- would be an appropriate individual with whom to associate an administrative intern.

Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

Dick

Dick Gorton
Professor

- -

(Please complete the following and return in the enclosed envelope.)

Please check.

_____ The materials you requested are enclosed.

_____ We do not have anything in writing, but the following represents a description of what actually occurs in practice regarding the criteria and process we use to select a school site for an administrative internship.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

* Please use reverse side if necessary*

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN—MILWAUKEE/ P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

AREA CODE 414
963-4740

February 19, 1987

Dear Administrator Internship Coordinator:

About a month ago, I sent you a brief survey inquiring about your administrator internship program. Although I have heard from many of the UCEA member institutions that received the survey, I have not yet received your response. Please complete the survey today (or at least this week) and mail it back to me in the envelope provided.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dick

Dick Gorton, Professor
Department of Administrative Leadership

RG:rmg

Enclosure

APPENDIX B

Gorton's

Proposed Site Selection Criteria Guide

School_____ School District_____

Principal_____ Superintendent_____

Intern_____

Criteria	Evidence
School or District will provide:	
1. At least a half-time but preferably a full-time internship.	
2. Learning experiences that will give the intern opportunities to apply theory taught in university courses and to learn relevant skills and knowledge not taught in those courses.	
3. Opportunities for intern to learn about administrative tasks before being asked to perform these tasks.	
4. Periodic (at least once a week) formal, formative feedback on intern's performance; summative feedback at end of year.	
5. Opportunities to observe the	

Criteria (continued)	Evidence
introduction of significant change in some aspect of the educational program.	
6. Opportunity to observe the operation of exemplary programs or procedures.	
7. Adequate office space.	
8. Sufficient secretarial assistance.	
9. Opportunities for professional travel and attendance at professional meetings.	
10. Compensation for intern at least comparable to the salary and fringe benefits the intern would receive as a teacher in the district.	

EVALUATION

Criteria	Insufficient	Satisfactory	Excellent	Criteria			
1.				6.			
2.				7.			
3.				8.			
4.				9.			
5.				10.			

Summary Rating _____

Rater _____

Gorton's

Proposed On-Site Supervisor Selection Criteria Guide

Supervisor's Name_____School_____

School District_____Intern_____

Criteria	Evidence
1. Understands and accepts the philosophy and objectives of the internship program.	
2. Has sufficient time to monitor and meet with the intern regularly.	
3. Has a commitment to the professional development of the intern being supervised.	
4. Would facilitate appropriate learning experiences for the intern.	
5. Possesses the technical skills for personnel supervision.	
6. Possesses the human relations skills and qualities for personnel supervision.	
7. Demonstrates excellent administrative and/or supervisory techniques that	

Criteria (continued)	Evidence
would represent a good model for an intern.	
8. Demonstrates leadership qualities and techniques that would represent a good model for the intern.	
9. Manifests a value system that reflects concern for people, strong ethics, and professional excellence.	
10. Possesses a commitment to his/her own professional development and improvement.	

EVALUATION

Criteria	Insufficient	Satisfactory	Excellent
1.	___	___	___
2.	___	___	___
3.	___	___	___
4.	___	___	___
5.	___	___	___
6.	___	___	___
7.	___	___	___
8.	___	___	___
9.	___	___	___
10.	___	___	___

Summary Rating _____

Rater _____